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15th September 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer

Treorchy Comprehensive School Update

This academic Year was never going to be 'normal' and was always going to be a journey into the unknown. Whilst we will continue to be proactive in our approach to providing a productive and safe environment in which to work and learn, we are inevitably faced with new challenges on a daily basis that demand us to be reactive to the ever-changing situation with which we are presented.

During the past 5 days, we have been notified that 7 of our sixth form pupils have tested positive for Covid-19 (6 in Year 13 and 1 in Year 12). In response to this, we have responded swiftly to protect the health of our school community by identifying all pupils who have been in close proximity to the pupil who has tested positive and asking them to self-isolate for 14 days. Using the approach that we have developed, it takes approximately 6-7 hours to undertake our investigations and swiftly inform everybody that need to be notified for each of these cases. Our approach could be considered very cautious and some pupils that have been asked to self-isolate may feel that they may not need to do so according to the PHW definition of who is a 'close contact'. However, to act at the pace that we have in the interest of our community's health and safety, it would have been physically impossible to undertake investigations on a more individual basis in the time that we had.

Having evaluated the situation and reviewed our procedures, we have decided that during the next few days we will look back through each case in an attempt to identify those who are not actually defined as 'close contacts' so that they are able to return to school as soon as possible. This will involve looking in detail at the seating plans to locate each pupil in each of the classes attended by all of the pupils who have tested positive. This will obviously be a time consuming and labour intensive task but we will complete this work as soon as possible to achieve our goal of enabling pupils who are currently self-isolating to return to school. We will also review the self-isolation dates that we have given each pupil to ensure that nobody is asked to remain at home for longer than needed.

Moving forward, we will adopt an approach where we will ask pupils who have been in close proximity to the pupil who has tested positive to remain at home for two days in the first instance during which time we will undertake the detailed work outlined above. We believe that this will reduce the number of pupils required to self-isolate and ultimately minimise the amount of schooling that our pupils miss. In addition, during the course of this week we will be providing further training for our staff to enhance the teaching and learning provision that we are able to offer pupils who are required to remain at home. One element of the training will involve exploring the possibility of 'live learning' where this is possible and considered to be suitable. We will share more information about this with pupils and their parents/ carers as appropriate from next week.

Whilst these are testing times for all members of our school community, I firmly believe that if we all continue to work together, we will succeed in achieving our aim of ensuring that every pupil at the school is provided with the best opportunities and education possible, in a safe and happy environment.

Thanks for your patience and ongoing support.

Yours sincerely

R. Angell Jones
Headteacher

A Community School committed to excellence
Ysgol Gymunedol wedi'i hymrwymo i ragoriaeth

